

EXHIBIT 12
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HB 382

House Bill 382
February 3, 2009
Presented by Ron Aasheim
House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Ron Aasheim, Administrator of the Communication & Education Division of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

I appear here today as an informational witness and to answer any questions you may have.

A brief history may be of interest. In the 2007 Legislature, HB 613 would have allowed a resident who was 9 years of age or older to hunt upland and migratory game birds and antlerless deer when in the presence of a mentor 25 years of age or older. That bill also eliminated the hunter safety course requirement for those individuals.

That bill created considerable reaction and due to some misunderstanding and miscommunication, significant frustration among many of Montana's hunter education instructors.

House Bill 613 was subsequently tabled. FWP made the commitment to assist in facilitating future discussions on the subject of hunter recruitment.

Late last fall at the request of the Families Afield organization, FWP coordinated meetings with hunter education instructors in Bozeman, Billings, Great Falls, Helena and Missoula. Families Afield had asked for the meetings to explain their interests, answer questions and provide hunter education instructors a better understanding of legislation that might be proposed. The response to Families Afield's proposal, as we expected, was mixed. The most consistent issues brought up had to do with whether there should be a minimum age and whether or not there should be a hunter education requirement.

If an apprentice bill similar to HB 382 were to pass, FWP would develop the apprentice certificate and affidavit and make it available on line, via our automated license system and at all FWP headquarters.